Elijah Bland ’04

By Troy Watkins

Elijah Bland ’04 combines jazz, funk, rhythm and blues, and an enterprising spirit, to record a distinctive twist on soul music. He plans to release his third solo album this fall.

“Music has always been one of the loves of my life,” he admits. “I started teaching myself to play the piano when I was five, and continued to play mostly by ear through my childhood.”

But Bland did not take a traditional route to a musical career. As an Assumption student he studied computer science and was a standout performer for the Greyhounds’ basketball team. Bland scored nearly 1,000 points in his four-year career, but it was a mutual passion for music that cemented his bond with teammate Richard Ijeh ’01.

“Our primitive dorm room recordings turned into three years of songwriting and production for local artists in the Worcester area,” says Bland. “Before long, I was writing and recording my own songs. In 2007, I released my debut album "Just Me..." (as "E. Bland"), which I wrote, produced and recorded almost entirely alone.”

Bland is thankful for his Assumption education. “I gained valuable lessons to manage my own business,” he believes. “I learned a great deal about mental toughness and how to face adversity. Adversity is omnipresent for independent artists, so I am thankful for the lessons that prepared me for life in this industry.”

Bland was especially influenced by Assistant Professor of Computer Science William Katcher. “He was one of my most intriguing computer science professors,” says Bland. “I was always inspired by his passion and extreme attention to detail.”

As he eagerly awaits the release of his third solo album this fall, Bland is scheduled to perform on the 6th Annual Capital Jazz SuperCruise, which will sail from Fort Lauderdale on a Caribbean tour in late October. The SuperCruise is affiliated with the Capital Jazz Fest in Columbia, MD, one of the premier jazz and soul music festivals in the country. Bland says, “I am beyond excited to share the stage with so many legendary artists (including Peabo Bryson, Will Downing and Boney James). It truly is a blessing to be grouped with such incredible talent.”

In addition to their music careers Bland and his wife co-own other ventures in graphic design, multimedia production and event planning. With several businesses to run, Bland is certainly making the most of his considerable talent.

“Assumption College made me stronger, wiser and more aware of reality,” he explains. With his many talents, Bland is shaping his own reality in the music industry.
Music from the Soul